



---

**DECISION MEMO**  
**BECKWOURTH PEAK TRAIL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT**  
**U.S. FOREST SERVICE**  
**PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST,**  
**BECKWOURTH RANGER DISTRICT AND TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST,**  
**SIERRAVILLE RANGER DISTRICT**  
**PLUMAS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**BACKGROUND**

The Plumas National Forest, Beckwourth Ranger District and the Tahoe National Forest, Sierraville Ranger District proposes to construct approximately 19.79 miles of multi-use trail from the City of Portola to connect with the recreation community of Gold Mountain.

There is a desire for access to the Beckwourth Peak area that would accommodate a variety of recreational users in a safe and resource sensitive manner. The trail will connect the City of Portola with the recreation community of Gold Mountain, giving additional opportunities to non-motorized users to explore Plumas County. The purpose of the project is to provide a long-term sustainable trail, with minimal maintenance needs, that expands access to additional user groups.

**PROJECT LOCATION**

The proposed trail segments are located on the Plumas National Forest, Beckwourth Ranger District and Tahoe National Forest, Sierraville Ranger District. The project is located south and east of Portola in Plumas County, California. The project area occupies portions of Township 22 North, Range 13 East, Sections 13,14 and 22-24; Township 22 North, Range 14 East, Sections 5-9, 17, and 18; and Township 23 North, Range 14 East, Section 31, Mt. Diablo Base Meridian.

**DECISION**

We have decided to implement the construction of the Beckwourth Peak Trail. The trail will be constructed to Trail Development Class 3 (moderate level of development) standards with trail tread width of 24" – 36". The trail is a multi-use trail and will be managed for bicycle, hiking and equestrian use. Clearing limits are 4' from trail center and 8' tall. Trail grade would average under 10 percent with a recommended average grade of seven (7) percent and maximum constructed grades not to exceed 15 percent for no more than 150 feet. No bridges are anticipated though some puncheon may be needed for wet areas. The attached map represents the preliminary alignment which has been surveyed by specialists. The survey corridor is 50 feet from each side of the centerline (100ft total) to allow for field adjustment to occur. Final alignment approval by the U.S.

Forest Service will occur prior to construction. If alignments deviate greater than the surveyed corridor, additional specialist review would be required.

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). The applicable category of actions is identified in agency procedures as under Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36, Section 220.6 (e) Category (1) Construction and reconstruction of trails. This category of action(s) is applicable because there are no extraordinary circumstances that might cause this action to have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively.

We find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – The proposed actions will have minimal to no impact of existing wildlife, fisheries, and botany. There will be appropriate measures to avoid impacts to sensitive species.
- Floodplain, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – The Project Area is located outside of the 100-year floodplain and will not create an impact to the floodplain. The proposed action will have little to no impact on wetlands. Additionally, there are no municipal watersheds in the project area.
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – The Project Area is not within a congressionally designated area of Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, or National Recreation Area.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – the Project Area is not in an inventoried roadless area or potential wilderness area.
- Research natural areas – The Project Area is not located within any Research natural Areas (RNA) or potential RNAs.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – This project will not affect any known American Indian religious or cultural sacred sites. The Forest Service consulted with local Native American Tribes and no comments were received. Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – This project will have no effect on Cultural Resources as long as all of the trail construction activities occur outside of all of the known archaeological site boundaries.

## PROJECT SPECIFIC MITIGATIONS

The following management requirements and mitigation measures are integral components of this decision and will be adhered to and incorporated into the implementation of this project.

## INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

There is one known noxious weed site in the project area that will be avoided. The noxious weed, medusahead is located in the northeast quarter of Section 22, T 22N, R 13 E. The site to avoid will be marked with orange noxious weed flagging. See the attached map.

Standard management requirements (SMRs) listed below were developed in accordance with the direction set forth in FSM 2900, as well as the standards and guidelines in Appendix A of the ROD for SNFPA:

### Prevention ☐

1. Require all off-road equipment and vehicles (Forest Service and contracted) used for project implementation to be weed-free. Clean all equipment and vehicles of all attached mud, dirt and plant parts at a vehicle washing station or steam cleaning facility before the equipment and vehicles enter the project area. Cleaning is not required for vehicles that will stay on the roadway. In addition, clean all off-road equipment prior to leaving areas infested with noxious weeds.
2. Make every effort to ensure that all materials (i.e. gravel, fill, mulches, etc.) used on the NFS are free of invasive species and/or noxious weeds. Use onsite sand, gravel, rock or organic matter where possible. Encourage use of certified weed-free hay and straw. Where states have legislative authority to certify materials as weed-free (or invasive free) and have an active State program to make those State-certified materials available to the public, rules shall be developed that restrict the possession, use, and transport of those materials unless proof exists that they have been State certified.

### Control ☐

1. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR): Inventory and survey so as to quickly detect invasive species infestations, and subsequently implement immediate and specific actions to eradicate those infestations before they become established and/or spread. Coordinate detection and response with internal and external partners. EDRR actions are grouped into three main categories: early detection, rapid assessment, and rapid response.

### Restoration/Revegetation ☐

1. Pro-actively manage aquatic and terrestrial areas of the NFS to increase the ability of those areas to be self-sustaining and resistant (resilience) to the establishment of invasive species. Where necessary, implement restoration, rehabilitation, and/or revegetation activities following invasive species treatments to prevent or reduce the likelihood of the reoccurrence or spread of invasive species.

Where restoration, rehabilitation, or revegetation activities are planned, use weed-free equipment, mulches, and seed sources. Avoid seeding in areas where revegetation will occur

naturally, unless noxious weeds are a concern. Save topsoil from disturbance and put it back to use in onsite revegetation, unless contaminated with noxious weeds. All activities that require seeding or planting will need to use only locally collected native seed sources. Plant and seed material should be collected from as close to the project area as possible. Persistent non-natives such as timothy, orchard- grass, or ryegrass will be avoided. This will implement the USFS Region 5 policy that directs the use of native plant material for revegetation and restoration for maintaining "the overall national goal of conserving the biodiversity, health, productivity, and sustainable use of forest, rangeland, and aquatic ecosystems".

## WILDLIFE RESOURCES

**Wildlife Limited Operating Periods:** Unless determined to be unnecessary following pre-implementation surveys, limited operating periods (LOPs) to protect key wildlife species listed in the Biological Evaluation/Biological Assessment will apply.

- **Bald Eagle:** Plumas National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (PNF LRMP) 1988, a Limited Operation Period (LOP) will be in place during operations from January 1 through August 31 to protect nesting Bald Eagles.
- **Peregrine Falcon:** Guidelines for Raptor Conservation in the Western United States, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 9, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Washington DC, Feb 2008, a Limited Operating Period of February 1-August 31 will be in place to protect nesting peregrines.

**New Wildlife Findings:** Where subsequent surveys identify occupied threatened, endangered, or sensitive species habitat, establish PACs, den site buffers, or other protections as described in the 2004 SNFPA ROD (USDA 2004b). Include protections for any additional sensitive species identified in the BE/BA.

**Known Populations (Amphibians):** There are not currently any known populations of TES amphibians in the project area. If populations of TES amphibians are discovered in the project area, apply direction from the 2004 SNFPA ROD and 2014 USFWS Programmatic Biological Opinion.

**Nest Trees and Wildlife Habitation:** All trees with nest structures in them or show signs of current wildlife habitation shall be retained, regardless of the diameter.

**Down Wood and Snags:** Large logs and snags ( $\geq 15$  inches dbh) shall be retained and the trail routed around them if there is a question of safety.

## HYDROLOGY

The PNF and TNF LRMP include Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines to maintain or, where necessary, improve water quality using Best Management Practices (BMP's). The following BMP's (FS-909a, National BMP for Water Quality Management on NFS Lands, April 2012) should be applied during planning and incorporated into the project plan and implementation document.

**Aquatic Ecosystems BMPs (Apply these BMPs if trail construction goes through RCA(s) in**

the field)

AqEco-2. Operations in Aquatic Ecosystems

AqEco-4. Stream Channels and Shorelines

#### **Recreation Activities BMPs**

Rec-1. Recreation Planning

Rec-2. Developed Recreation Sites

Rec-3. Dispersed Use Recreation

Rec-4. Motorized and Nonmotorized Trails

#### **Road BMPs**

Road-10. Equipment Refueling and Servicing

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Plumas National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. Information about the Beckwourth Peak Recreation Project and how to provide comments was posted to the Plumas National Forest website on September 26, 2017 and letters were mailed to the public and government agencies on October 3, 2017. Out of 188 comments received from September 26-November 6, 2017, just over half of the comments (over 96) were in support of the trail.

### **FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

This decision is consistent with the Plumas National Forest Land Management Plan and the Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The project was designed in conformance with the Plumas and Tahoe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans, as amended.

The Project is consistent with other laws and regulations. Included in these are: the National Environmental Policy Act, 2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, and Invasive Species Management.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES**

This decision is not subject to administrative review pursuant to the 2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act and 2014 Farm Bill. The proposed Beckwourth Peak Trail Construction Project qualifies for categorical exclusion 36 CFR 220.6 (e) Category (1): Construction and reconstruction of trails.

### **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Implementation of this decision may occur immediately after this Decision Memo is signed.

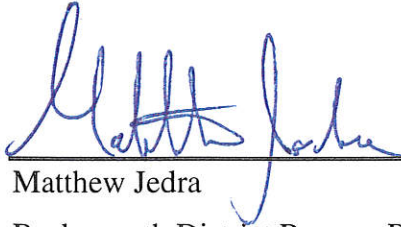




## CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Matthew Jedra, Beckwourth District Ranger at (530) 836-7110 or [matthew.jedra@usda.gov](mailto:matthew.jedra@usda.gov) or  
Quentin Youngblood, Sierraville District Ranger, (530) 994-3401 or  
[quentin.youngblood@usda.gov](mailto:quentin.youngblood@usda.gov).

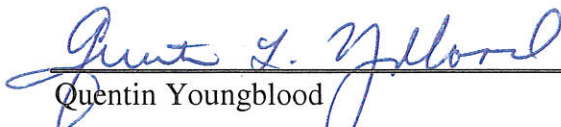


Matthew Jedra

Beckwourth District Ranger, Plumas National Forest

10/29/2019

Date



Quentin Youngblood

Sierraville District Ranger, Tahoe National Forest

October 29, 2019

Date

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.